

Separate the *signal* from the *noise*

Five questions to find true value when evaluating a vendor's AI offerings

Nearly every health care industry conference these days is packed with vendors talking about artificial intelligence (AI). The technology offers incredible potential to transform administrative, operational, and clinical tasks, but trying to navigate the market's offerings and sales pitches can be daunting. When evaluating any AI offering, it is important to dig beyond salient features and theoretical value to ensure the solution offers proven value.

Entering into an agreement with an AI vendor without a thorough understanding of their offer is a costly mistake. We've developed five core questions to serve as a quick test during your conversations with AI vendors. These questions will help you determine whether a company's solution warrants a deeper discussion.

A 2019 OptumIQ™ AI survey of 500 health care leaders showed...

62%

Of leaders report having implemented an AI strategy, compared to just 33% in 2018.

89%

Of leaders agree employees are not getting trained in AI quickly enough.

\$40M

Estimated average investment over the next five years for AI-related projects, an increase of over \$7M compared to 2018 estimates.

1

Does the AI address *our problem(s)*?

- AI can perform a variety of tasks. Ensure this solution aligns with your goals.
- Embedding AI is not always the right answer. Be mindful of where the technology can create the most value for your organization.

2

How was the AI *developed*?

- Evaluate the variety and volume of data used to train and validate the model, as well as the background of the experts who annotated the input data.
- Scrutinize what safeguards were put in place to reduce biases in the model, and how users can modify the algorithm if needed.
- Determine if the AI is built for a single domain or is a general-purpose solution.
- See if the vendor can demonstrate the AI's explainability to reduce the "black box" effect.

3

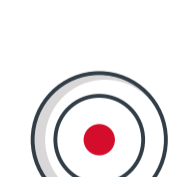
Has the AI been deployed in a *similar environment*?

- Confirm if the AI solution is in full-scale production or in pilot mode. Find out if it has been deployed across care settings and target populations similar to yours.
- Check if the solution is open source or proprietary, and if it integrates with your EHR or other ancillary systems.
- Determine how the solution scales, and if it is customizable for future AI developments or shifting patient populations.
- Request case studies or references that show previous customer results and product performance.
- Ask the vendor if they have received any regulatory approval where appropriate, or if they have any active applications for approval.

4

Does the AI *significantly improve* on conventional approaches?

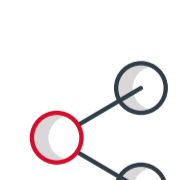
- Inquire about any past or current clinical studies. AI that has been rigorously tested will garner more confidence among users.
- Compare the AI to existing tools. If an AI-based model and a conventional model perform similarly, the conventional model is likely the safer bet.
- A model's accuracy alone can be deceptive. Ask about its sensitivity and specificity.



Accuracy is the overall percentage of cases a model predicts or classifies correctly.



Sensitivity refers to a model's ability to detect a true positive.



Specificity refers to a model's ability to detect a true negative.

- See if the vendor can offer pre-contract analysis of your data and a demonstration of their ability to generate a return on investment from it.

5

Will this vendor be a *true partner*?

- Ask what supporting services the vendor offers to address implementation, staff training, and ongoing validation of AI models.
- Evaluate the vendor's experience working with AI, specifically with health care organizations.
- Gain clarity around who "owns" the data after implementation.
- Explore if the vendor is willing to take on more risk to prove that its AI can provide value for your organization.
- Analyze how the vendor sees the market evolving, and what AI functionality it is exploring for future product enhancements.